

Do your part to help save lives. As a donor, you can help save or improve the lives of more than 50 people. Donation is a personal decision, and you can choose which organs and tissue to donate.

| <u>Organs</u> | <u>Tissue</u> |
|---------------|---------------|
| heart | corneas |
| pancreas | heart valves |
| kidneys | tendons |
| liver | skin |
| lungs | bones |

It is now possible to donate life to others as a living donor. Kidneys are the most common organ donated by living donors. The remaining kidney will enlarge, doing the work of two healthy kidneys. People may also donate a part of their liver, which grows back and regains full function. Partial lung and pancreas can also be donated to help others.

Organ and tissue donation is all about donating life. Now is the best time to sit down with your family and talk about it. Let your family know your decision. Only you have the power to save lives. Because when you do nothing, everybody loses.

Believe it or not, many African Americans have never thought about donating their organs, even though there is a critical shortage. Did you know that more than 80,000 men, women and children are waiting for a life-saving transplant and 35 percent of all patients waiting for a kidney transplant are African American? On top of that, every 13 minutes another name is added to the waiting list. What's more disturbing is that an average of 17 people die each day because there are not enough organ donors. Decide to be a donor and donate life. We can help each other.

Talking to your family about your decision to donate your organs and tissue is just as important as making the decision. Talking about organ and tissue donation means talking about life. It's the opportunity for you to share your life with others. Even if you have registered, marked it on your license or signed a donor card you need to tell your family. A conversation with your family will take place before donation can happen, so they need to know your wishes.

African Americans are at high risk for many illnesses like high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease that can lead to the need for an organ transplant. That's why it is so important to protect your health and prevent the future need for a transplant.

- Have your blood pressure checked at least twice a year.
- Limit foods high in salt, cholesterol and saturated fats such as fried foods that can clog the arteries.
- Visit your doctor at least once a year.
- Be sure to be tested for diabetes and other illnesses that can lead to organ failure.



**lives will be saved
if you do nothing**

12%
**of the U.S. population
is African American**

35%
of patients awaiting
kidney transplants
are African American

There is a lot of confusion in the African American community about organ and tissue donation. But for something as important as saving lives, only the facts count.

Fact: Anyone can be a potential donor regardless of age, race, or medical history.

Fact: Most religions support organ and tissue donation and see it as the final act of love and generosity towards others.

Fact: If you are sick or injured and admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ and tissue donation can only be considered after you are deceased and after your family has been consulted.

Fact: When you are on the waiting list for an organ, what really counts is the severity of your illness, time spent waiting, blood type, and other important medical information.

Fact: An open casket funeral is possible for organ and tissue donors. Through the entire donation process the body is treated with care, respect and dignity.

Fact: There is no cost to the donor or their family for organ or tissue donation.

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Lamar's Story

Four-year-old Lamar Bradley was laying in a hospital dying from an inflamed liver. No one saw it coming. Just weeks before he had been a healthy child, playing outdoors with his friends. Now his only hope for survival was a liver transplant.



Lamar Bradley

Nearby, 12-year-old LaKendra Hill had been in a car accident. Doctors did everything they could to save her, but she died. Her mom sat beside her bed and thought about LaKendra's willingness to help others. She decided to donate LaKendra's organs.

Since Lamar was so sick and had the same blood type as LaKendra, he was at the top of the waiting list for her donated liver. Now he would get his second chance at life.

Lamar's mom was thankful when she heard that there was a liver for her son, but she was also concerned for the family who had lost their child. Lamar's transplant was successful, and two weeks later he left the hospital. Soon he was back to being a regular kid, hard charging and playing T-ball with his friends.

Today at 13, Lamar likes to draw and is a good student. He and his mom have become friends with LaKendra's parents.

"If I had not made the choice to donate, I don't think I would have healed," says LaKendra's mom. "It makes the pain easier to bear, knowing that LaKendra made a difference in someone else's life."

Loletha's Story

Loletha Glover waited nearly four years for a new kidney. Every day, five times a day, she relied on dialysis to keep her alive. Despite the physical exhaustion caused by the treatments, she worked and kept a positive attitude.



Loletha Glover
photo: Charlotte Observer

Everywhere Loletha went, though, she carried a pager. It became her lifeline, her only way of knowing if there just might be a kidney for her. Her hopes were raised three different times when the pager went off, but each time it wasn't meant to be. The kidneys weren't a match. "It was disappointing," Loletha admits. Still she kept the faith.

Then September 23, 1992, the beeper sounded again. This time it was a match. The surgery went well. Soon Loletha was back at work, no longer dependent on dialysis.

"I felt like a brand new person," she says. "I could feel renewed strength and my body was no longer tired. Being off dialysis gave me a new sense of freedom."

But there was more good news to come. A few years later, Loletha married and in August 2000 she gave birth to her daughter, Sareniah.

"All of this was possible because one wonderful person decided to donate their organs," said Loletha.

You can breathe new life into another person's hopes and dreams. You can bring comfort to a family worried about a loved one. You have the power to save lives. All it takes is your decision to become an organ and tissue donor. Please do it today. On behalf of the patients who are waiting for a transplant, thank you.